AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended) A system for receiving and forwarding e-mail messages for a subscriber, the system comprising:

a server coupled to a network; and

an agent resident and operable on the server;

wherein the agent is adapted to compare characteristics of e-mail messages received for the subscriber to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, to generate a message ID for each e-mail message that contains a characteristic match, to alert the subscriber, the alert including the message ID, when a the characteristic match is found, and to execute instructions associated with the message ID received from the subscriber in response to the alert for forwarding of the message received for which a match was found.

2.   (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 1 wherein the subscriber is alerted on finding a characteristic match by sending a message to a mobile device carried by the subscriber.

3.   (Original) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a human interface whereby an operator causes received and matched mail to be forwarded to mail addresses provided by the subscriber responding to the alert by conversing with the operator via telephone.

4.   (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a telephone menu system whereby a subscriber, responding to an alert, may perform one or more of the following actions: log in, identify messages, select from recorded options, and/or input information for forwarding of identified messages.

5.   (Currently Amended) An e-mail server comprising:

an e-mail system adapted for receiving and forwarding e-mail; and

an agent adapted to compare characteristics of e-mail messages received for the subscriber to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, <u>to generate a message ID for each e-mail message that contains a characteristic match,</u> to alert the subscriber when <s>a</s> <u>the</u> characteristic match is found<u>,</u> <u>the alert including the message ID</u>, and to execute instructions <u>associated with the message ID</u> received from the subscriber in response to the alert for forwarding of the message received for which a match was found.

6.   (Previously Presented) An e-mail server as in claim 5 wherein the subscriber is alerted on finding a characteristic match by sending a message to a mobile device carried by the subscriber.

7.   (Original) An e-mail server as in claim 5 further comprising a human interface whereby an operator causes received and matched mail to be forwarded to mail addresses provided by the subscriber responding to the alert by conversing with the operator via telephone.

8.   (Previously Presented) An e-mail server as in claim 5 further comprising a telephone menu system whereby a subscriber, responding to an alert, may perform one or more of the following actions: log in, identify messages, select from recorded options, and/or input information for forwarding of identified messages.

9.   (Currently Amended) A method for receiving, filtering, and routing e-mail messages, comprising steps of:

(a) prerecording on a mail server characteristics for messages to be routed, the characteristics provided by a subscriber;

(b) receiving messages addressed to the subscriber at the mail server;

(c) comparing characteristics of messages received to the prerecorded characteristics provided by the subscriber;

(d) identifying and storing on the mail server messages received for the subscriber for which a match is found to the prerecorded characteristics;

(e) generating a message ID for each message that contains a characteristic match;

_____(f) alerting the subscriber to the receipt of one or more messages for which a the characteristic match is found, the alert including the message ID;

(g~f~) receiving instructions associated with the message ID for forwarding the stored messages from the subscriber in response to the alert; and

(h~g~) forwarding the stored messages for which a match is found to destinations according to the instructions provided in response to the alert.

10.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein, in the alerting step, a message is sent to a mobile device carried by the subscriber to alert the subscriber to the receipt of the one or more messages.

11.   (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein, in the forwarding step, an operator enters destinations provided by the subscriber by telephone conversation in response to the alert, and causes the one or more messages to be forwarded.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein, in the forwarding step, a subscriber, in response to the alert, interacts with a phone menu system, identifying messages and selecting destinations for forwarding.

13.   (Currently Amended) An agent for processing e-mail messages, comprising:

a stored list of message characteristics provided by a subscriber;

a receiver adapted for receiving e-mail messages and ascertaining message characteristics of the received messages;

a comparator adapted for comparing characteristics of received messages with stored characteristics, ~~and~~ tagging those messages wherein the characteristics match, and generating a message ID for each e-mail message that contains the characteristic match;

an alert mechanism for alerting a subscriber to the receipt of messages having characteristics matching the stored characteristics, the alert including the message ID; and

a save facility adapted for storing matched messages against future distribution instructions, the future distribution instructions associated with the message ID received from the subscriber in response to the alert.

14.   (Canceled)

15.   (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 13 wherein the alert mechanism comprises a message transmitter adapted for transmitting a message to a mobile device carried by the subscriber.

16.   (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 13 further comprising a forwarding facility for retrieving and forwarding stored messages to destinations provided by the subscriber in response to the alert.

17.   (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises a human interface for performing one or more of the following: identifying messages to be retrieved, retrieving the identified messages, and/or forwarding the identified messages to destinations provided to an operator by the subscriber.

18.   (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises an automated telephone menu system adapted for providing choices to a subscriber connecting to the forwarding facility by telephone, wherein the subscriber calling in may identify stored messages to be forwarded, and the agent will retrieve and forward the identified messages to destinations provided by the subscriber calling in response to the alert.

19.   (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving a message for a subscriber;

comparing the message to criteria;

if the message matches the criteria, then generating a message ID and sending an alert including the message ID to the subscriber;

receiving a reply from the subscriber in response to the alert, the reply comprising instructions associated with the message ID for the message; and

processing the message according to the instructions.

20.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the message is an email message.

21.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a notification message that identifies the received message and criteria matching the message.

22.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the comparing step comprises filtering the message to determine if parts of the message meet the criteria.

23.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the criteria are one or more of the following:

message sender information;

message subject line information;

message body information; and/or

message attachment information.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert comprises at least a portion of the message.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a pager.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a phone.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the instructions comprise a command to forward the message to a new destination.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the new destination is one or more of the following:

   an e-mail address;

   a fax number;

   a telephone number;

   a mobile device;

   a hand-held computer;

   a notebook computer;

   a server computer; and/or

   an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the reply is received via one or more of the following entities:

   an operator;

   a voice-response system;

   a telephone call;

   an auto attendant; and/or

   a mobile device.